

## A. BACKGROUND

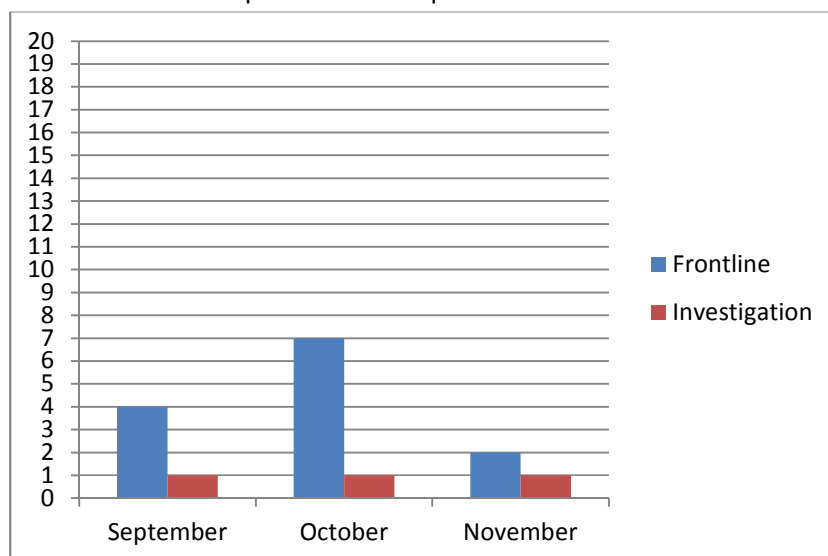
The University introduced a new Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) from the end of August 2013, in common with all other Scottish Universities. The new procedure is more streamlined, and it has only two internal stages, comprising Frontline Resolution and Investigation. The introduction and content of these procedures was driven by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). Once the internal stages have been completed, the complainant then has the option to ask the SPSO to review the handling of the complaint.

The Ombudsman requires the University to report on the numbers of complaints for each quarter, including those under the Frontline and Investigation parts of the procedure; average duration; trends; case studies; and changes/improvements made.

## B. COMPLAINTS DATA FOR QUARTER<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Number of Complaints

The number of complaints for this quarter is shown in the chart below.



The total number and percentage of complaints for this quarter by type of procedure is shown in the table below.

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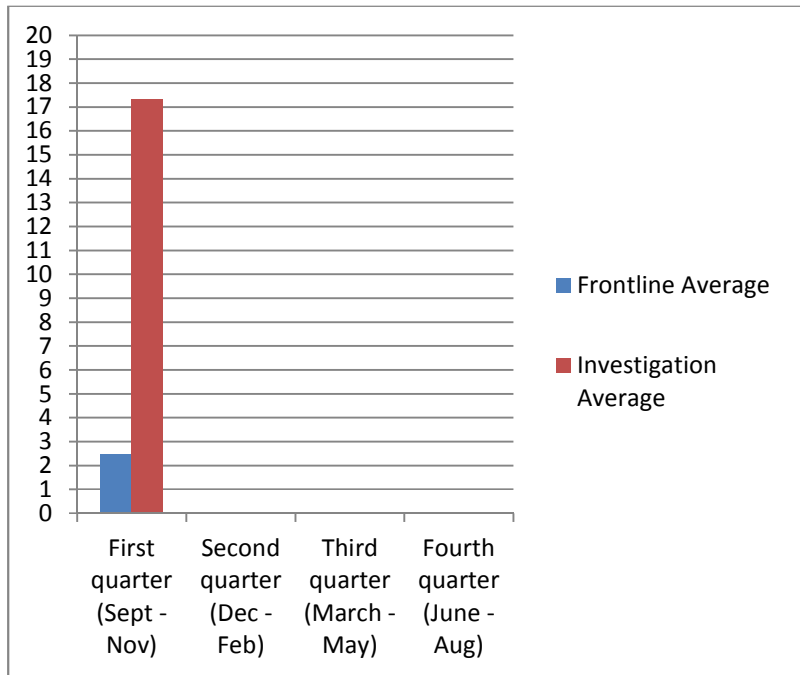
<sup>1</sup> This report excludes any complaints still being handled from the old Student Complaints Procedure which applied prior to 31 August 2013

Number of frontline complaints	13
Number of complaint investigations	3
Total number of complaints	16
Frontline complaints as a percentage of total	81.25%
Complaint investigations as a percentage of total	18.75%

As expected, the number of Frontline complaints exceeds those for Investigations. The new CHP lays emphasis upon the quick resolution of complaints at the point where they arise, in preference to lengthy investigations, although some complaints may either start at the Investigation stage (if complex or sensitive) or may proceed to Investigation after Frontline Resolution if the complainant is still dissatisfied. There is no automatic progression from Frontline to Investigation.

## 2. Time taken to resolve

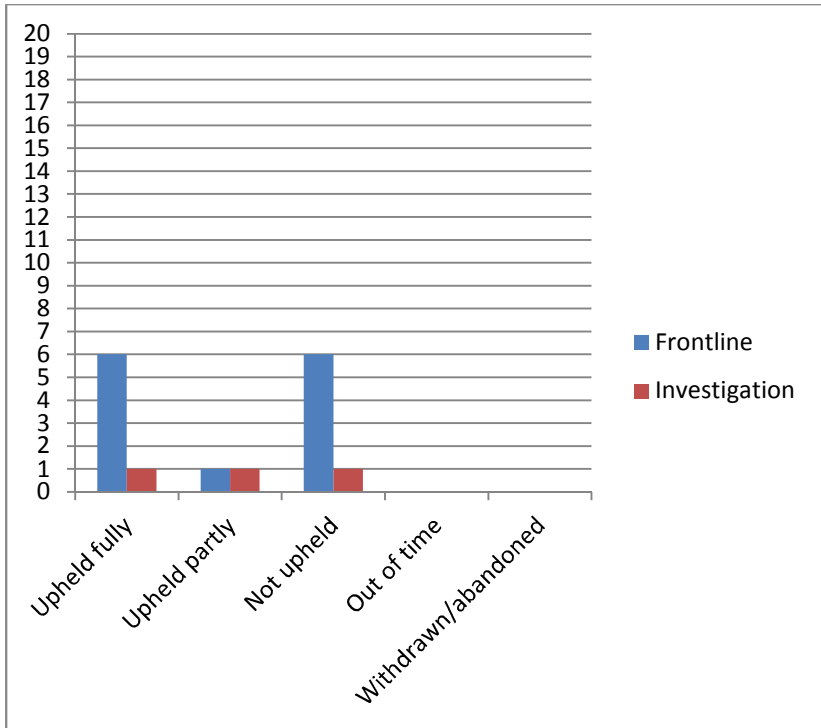
The chart below shows the average length of time to deal with complaints in working days.



The targets for dealing with complaints, set down by the SPSO, are 5 working days for Frontline Resolution and 20 working days for Complaint Investigation cases, which by nature are more complex.

## 3. Complaint Decisions

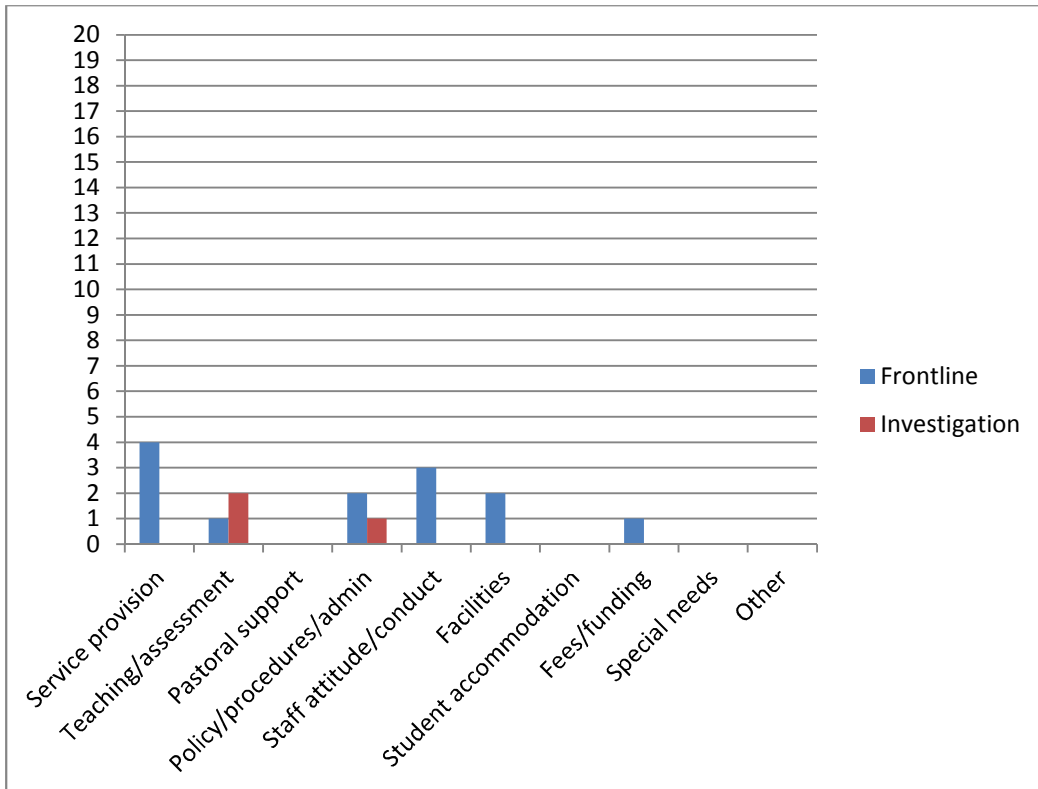
The chart below shows the complaint decisions reached for this quarter.



For Frontline Resolution cases, there is a roughly equal split between upheld and not upheld. Investigation cases are split between upheld fully, upheld partly and not upheld. These numbers, particularly for Investigation cases, are too low to draw meaningful conclusions.

#### 4. Nature of Complaints

The chart below shows the nature of the complaints made.



The figures above show a wide variation across categories.

### C. TRENDS AND ACTION TAKEN

It is too early in the operation of the new CHP to draw any firm conclusions about complaints or trends. The figures for IS reflect a small number of complaints arising in relation to the Library environment. Library staff have been assiduous in recording complaints. There has been a learning curve, and some of these expressions of dissatisfaction are now dealt with under the Library's existing mechanisms for obtaining and acting on feedback. Generally, the Library has a system for obtaining feedback from students and responds to such complaints by asking students to be quiet, and by monitoring Library usage, demand patterns and opening hours. This appears to be working well and responding to student feedback and complaints.

Further details of action taken are not provided in this published report due to the risk of identification of individual complainants.

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